

STAINBECK CHURCH (UNITED REFORMED)

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

<https://stainbeckurc.org.uk>

Sunday 1st February 2026 held within Morning Worship



BOOK OF REPORTS FOR 2025

SECRETARIES' REPORT

As the Lunch Club is closed over the Christmas and New Year period I am using this morning (29th December) to write our secretaries report.

Over the course of the year Stainbeck has continued to work with our local churches and partnerships to share the love of God in our local community and beyond. We have welcomed Claire Jones on to the Eldership Team and Marion Strange into membership on Anniversary Sunday. Your Eldership Team are: - Avril and Brian Bellwood; Ann Coates; Emmanuelle Bastide-Wilson and Claire Jones. Our named Minister is Revd Dr Nicola Robinson. We have also welcomed Catherine Whatmough as our administrator. Catherine works from the Church office at Stainbeck on Monday and Wednesday mornings and at West Park on Tuesdays and Thursdays. You may remember her introducing herself to us all when she wrote about herself in Outlook. Sadly, I must report that the After Eights Group have decided to close as no one feels able to take up the role of organiser.

Once more we must thank our Tech Team of Adrian Booth, Judith Taylor, with support from Richard Hamlin and Elvis Nanseu, for providing their expertise which enables us to continue to offer on-line worship via Zoom to all those who are unable to come to Church in person. This service is also appreciated by some of our URC Leeds Partnership friends who regularly Zoom in.

Our Partnership Churches were once again able to come together on Zoom and in person for both our Lent and Advent courses led by our Ministry Team who are: - Revds Dr Nicola Robinson, Angela Hughes, Tim Lowe; Geoff Ellis and Mr. Alex Walker who is the Elder in Local Leadership for the URC in South Leeds.

Stainbeck hosted the Elders' Conference in May 2025. The Partnership held an Away Day at St. Luke's Lutheran Church in Headingley; Revd Nicola helped to organise the Synod's Big Day Out at the Yorkshire Sculpture Park near Wakefield; Revd Nicola also led a Pet Blessing Service at Stainbeck and led our 94th Anniversary service on Sunday 18th May 2025. Revd Angela took the funeral of Florence Wilson at Stainbeck. Florence was one of our long-standing Church members and

is missed by us all. No marriages or baptisms were held during 2025. Also, Revd Samantha Sheehan and her husband Peter, members of our Church Family, moved to Mirfield where Samantha is now the Minister in charge of the SPACE group of churches. Our love and prayers to them both as Samantha takes on this new and challenging role. We must not forget the 'All Things New' celebrations in October when we celebrated the insulation of the new roof and café walls.

We must thank Jo Yates and Helen Booth our regular musicians who provide our music, on a variety of instruments – we are so lucky to have their expertise. We must also say a big **THANK YOU** to Edith Harmer who delighted everyone by playing 'Away in a Manger' on her flute. We must not forget to thank the Leeds Concert Band for their concert at Stainbeck to raise funds for the Church.

The Community Café is open every Thursday, between 11am and 1pm. We welcome everyone from the local community and beyond to join us for tea, coffee, toasties, sandwiches and cake and of course a warm room and a listening ear. We have two regular teams of Janet, Kelly and Vicky and Adrian and Lyndsey. We must also thank Jen and Viv, Lyndsey's friends who stood in for her whilst she was visiting family in Australia with her husband. Our thanks also to Maureen and Vanessa – on hand to support as needed.



Every Thursday evening a small, dedicated team lead our Thursday prayers, which goes out on our zoom link. We would like to encourage you to join us, when you are able, for a short 30 minutes of prayer for family, friends and wider concerns within our world.

We both send our love and prayers to you all and look forward to working with you all in 2026. Happy New Year.

Avril and Brian Bellwood
Joint Church Secretaries

WORSHIP REPORT

Another year of worshipping together here and in our Leeds Partnership churches has gone and it is good to look back on that which we have shared week by week. We continue to be blessed to have Revd Nicola and Revd Angela to lead our worship month by month and it has been good to welcome the other members of the Ministry Team to bring their messages for us as we follow the lectionary. Thankyou Revds Geoff and Tim and it was good to welcome Alex back too. During the year we have been blessed to welcome 10 other preachers both ordained and lay to lead our worship. It has been good to welcome Professor Haddon Willmer again to share with us in worship. The Elders and I have led 4 services which is a privilege for us.

We are always happy to see a small regular group of friends sharing with us each week on Zoom, we value your company. Thursday prayers continue to be important to a regular group each week – if you have internet access do consider joining this peaceful half hour, the Zoom link is always to be found in Outlook and on the website. Our prayers are now shared with Partnership friends on the first Thursday of each month. Good news is that Claire Jones will be taking her turn to lead Thursday prayers in the new year. Thank you Claire, and of course continued thanks too to Karen, Avril and Brian and our two ministers who regularly provide a focus for our thinking.



Traditional festival services were celebrated through the year as the church calendar rolled around. This year you will recall it was our turn to lead Hymns in the Street with the theme ‘Be brave, be strong’. It was so good to hear such a variety of personal stories from individuals across the churches in Chapel Allerton. Stories of times when faith had strengthened and encouraged them through difficult times. The music was great, led again by Nick Seddon from St Matthew’s with singers and musicians from several

Churches. It had been very wet the day before we met out in Regent

Street but thankfully once again, a good crowd, we sang with joy in the sunshine. These opportunities to share together with Christians from other fellowships, whether within the Leeds Partnership or from Chapel Allerton and Meanwood churches, are always valuable especially when Sunday by Sunday we are now a small but faithful group.

There is a wide range of Partnership services and activities in which to share and I do encourage you to make the most of them. Many years ago, when I first became Stainbeck's District Council and Synod representative, I discovered that whilst meetings can sometimes be a chore I was always encouraged to feel a part of something so much bigger than the Stainbeck family – and that was when we had many more to share worship with than we do now!

Look out for the Lent and Advent courses – not onerous but reflective and helpful. Consider joining in one of the quiet days – two were offered this year, both peaceful, thoughtful times of sharing. Revd Nicola led another Pet's service which welcomed visitors, both two-and-four-legged friends who were all well behaved. Pets no longer with us were remembered with love and thanks were given for all creatures both domesticated and wild with whom we share our world. As I write we look forward to the familiar worshipping in community with carols round the fire pits, in the streets and of course in church.



I cannot conclude without offering a big thank you to all those who behind the scenes faithfully make our worship happen week by week. The musicians, Jo and Helen – and sometimes Liam; Adrian, Judy and Richard our invaluable Tech Team. Emmanuelle who sets up a cosy corner and varied activities for any little ones who may arrive. Those who thoughtfully read the Scriptures week by week, the welcomers, and tea and coffee makers, the bakers, the flower bringers and deliverers, the furniture movers, all who come to share a smile, to listen and to feel blessed week by week. To all the Stainbeck family – thank you.

Ann Coates – Worship Co-ordinator

LUNCH CLUB REPORT

Lunch Club meets on Monday mornings from 11-2.00 pm in the café room. We have a membership of 12 people, including the cooks and shoppers, who all sit down together to enjoy a two-course meal. We have, over the course of the year enjoyed the company of various people who have called in and stayed for a meal. We are hoping that some of these people will return to eat with us again. Sadly, Brenda Hogshaw, died in August after a short illness. Brenda had been coming for a while and really enjoyed her time with us. Her funeral was held at Lawnswood in September which some of the Lunch Club attended.

This year we enjoyed a wonderful Christmas lunch of turkey with stuffing, sprouts, carrots, peas, roast and mashed potatoes; followed by Christmas pudding and custard. The children from Angels' Nursery came to sing some of their Christmas songs. They were delightful and made us all smile.



A big THANK YOU to Marion Strange, Christine Robson, Helen Inglis and Roger Robson for helping with the washing up and clearing away. We must also thank Brian Bellwood who unfortunately could not attend the lunch as he was in bed with the flu. Brian usually prepares the lunch on Mondays now with Marions help – however he is fully recovered at the time of writing this report. It is good to see Helen Inglis now coming to enjoy a meal and a chat on Monday mornings without having the responsibility of cooking.

Unfortunately, we have not managed any trips out this year, but when the weather warms up, we are hoping to organise a trip out for lunch in 2026. We hope that everyone who attends the Lunch Club have had a happy and peaceful Christmas and we are looking forward to meeting together again on Monday 5th January 2026. Once again, our thanks to the Church for providing a room for us with a wonderful kitchen and for all your thoughts and prayers.

Avril Bellwood - Lunch Club Organiser

CHRISTIAN AID REPORT

Christian Aid Week, 10th-17th May 2025



The theme for Christian Aid week in 2025, their 80th year, was the unstoppable power of hope with a focus on Guatemala and the effects of climate change on their crops.

Aurelia is an inspirational farmer and community leader, and her family belong to the Indigenous Q'eqchi' community of the Alta Verapaz region. The climate crisis and industrial plantations have changed their land dramatically. Twice daily they have to collect water from a natural sinkhole, like a cave with water at the bottom.

With funding from Christian Aid, Congcoop supports communities to return to indigenous farming practices and adopt practices that conserve their land, culture and livelihood. Aurelia attended the specialist agricultural training on offer to learn about native seeds, producing organic fertilizer, constructing rainwater collection systems and making nutritious food and medicine for her chickens. She has led community activities to produce chocolate, establish a farmer's market and fight for women's rights.

We held a Christian Aid café, along with a plant and book sale, on 17th May with all proceeds going to Christian Aid. The URC Partnership members and friends were very generous with their time, publicity of the event, baking skills, card making, seedlings and gifts of money enabling us to raise an amazing £1127.92 (including Gift Aid). We used the card reader for the first time and that worked well and people were encouraged to fill in a Gift Aid form if applicable.

An additional donation was made in July directly from the church to Christian Aid for the Thursday café during Christian Aid week, the communion service in May and Charity of the Month collections for May and June. Thank you very much for your ongoing support for this charity.

Helen and Adrian Booth - Christian Aid Organisers

PROPERTY REPORT 2025-2026

The Management & Property Team (MAP) meets on the 2nd Monday of each month to discuss all aspects of the Church property. Membership comprises: Brian Bellwood, Adrian Booth, Angela Hughes, David Wilson, Nicola Robinson and Judy Taylor.

In addition to dealing with regular and ad hoc management and property issues throughout the year, MAP has been closely involved with the negotiation of a new lease with Angels Nursery.

NURSERY LEASE

The previous lease with Angels Nursery ran from August 2019 to August 2025. A revaluation to account for inflation over that 6-year period means that the new lease will yield a significant increase in income. The previous lease was also inclusive of utilities such as gas, electricity and water. Because of this, a huge increase in electricity charges over the past three years proved even more challenging than it otherwise would have. We are very grateful to Angels Nursery for the extra payments they voluntarily made towards the additional electricity costs.

Under the new lease, which has been negotiated but is still with solicitors awaiting finalisation and signature, the cost of utilities will be recharged based on usage.

ALSO, DURING THE PAST YEAR...

- We developed a recruitment process in conjunction with West Park URC following which Catherine Whatmough was appointed to the post of church administrator, jointly working across West Park and Stainbeck. Catherine works for Stainbeck on Monday and Wednesday mornings, based in the church office. Her role includes room bookings and compliance issues such as regular equipment servicing and safety checks.
- We carried out a review of church cleaning within the context of the Leeds URC Partnership and the need to standardise arrangements. As a result, a cleaning company called Beck and Call, who already provide a cleaning service for West Park URC, were employed for a

trial period and were subsequently appointed to provide cleaning services on an ongoing basis from January 2026. We are very grateful to Glenn for all his work over many years keeping the church clean.

- We have reviewed room booking charges and amended these where appropriate.
- We have also overseen repairs to the church car park including drainage to address problems with flooding near the boiler room after heavy rain and resurfacing the central area to deal with deep potholes.
- Updated food handling and allergen awareness training has been undertaken by Lunch Club and Community Café volunteers.

CURRENT PRIORITIES

A focus for the coming year will be to secure grant funding to draught proof the windows in the main worship space. This will require secondary double glazing and the installation of mechanical ventilation. The single glazed windows in the nursery area are also a priority but, because the space is leased to a private business, it might prove more difficult to secure grant funding towards the cost of this.

Management and Property Team



A reminder of the insulation success



InterACT REPORT

Over the last few years, we've been working to connect better with other spaces in Meanwood.

Now we have the Men Shed at Meanwood Farm, community café at Holy Trinity Community Hall, food pantry at Meanwood Community Centre, shared youth space at Stainbeck, and run Meanwood Olympics annually at Woodhouse Cricket Club. These wider connections help increase awareness of InterACT, encouraging a larger number of people to have a sense of ownership and belonging, and ensures we're working in partnership with others.

Partnership working continued to be a key element of the philosophy and practice of InterACT through 2025. We believe it's an important way for us to be as effective as possible, bring a faith voice to the table, stay relevant and support others. We're the Community Anchor for the Moortown Ward as part of Leeds Community Anchor Network and attend interagency and network meetings where possible. We're also connected to other organisations through the Council's ABCD network, Your Local Pantry, Leeds Food Aid Network, Men's Health Unlocked and more. Of course, we also work in partnership with THRIVE in developing youth work.

It was fantastic to welcome Eamon Rooney on board the InterACT staff team this year as our new Men's Worker. Eamon lives locally and has lots of relevant experience. He's supporting our volunteers at the Men Shed as well as looking to develop new activities with local men. You may have seen him out and about in the warmer months with newcomer Ian. They've been outside Stainbeck cutting back overgrowth and generally keeping the space tidy, and they will be working to create the foundations for what we're calling the "nature garden" around the new bench near the Cabin. This will be a space for all to enjoy and for young people to tend. We look forward to seeing this develop as we reach the warmer months again. Eamon's is a much-valued role in our times, and we're very pleased to have him on board. He's usually at the café on a Thursday, so if you're able to drop in, do say hello!

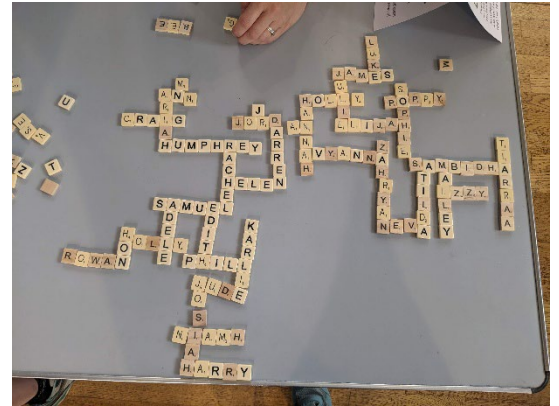
Vanesa Brown - InterACT



THRIVE REPORT

It's been a busy year at **Messy Church**.

We have welcomed lots of new faces alongside our more regular families, we celebrated our 10th birthday back in June, and we've been thinking a lot as a team about how we can develop our work. It's been great to have our young volunteers as part of the team, and to have the young people who have been part of the Wilderness Project working alongside us: *"Being involved in Messy Church has grown confidence on all parts of my life."*



We are looking at ways to encourage young people to remain engaged with Messy Church as they enter their teenage years and through to becoming young adults. One of the key values of Messy Church is being All-Age, so we are looking at how we can be more 'Intentionally Intergenerational' about the way we do things in Messy Church, and seeing how that impacts the young people in our community. We are really excited to be thinking about how Messy Church can be more for everyone and look forward to seeing what the next two years brings.

We have welcomed new members at **Totally Tuesday** this past term and also continued to be a place of connection for those who have started Year 7 in different secondary schools.

It's also been encouraging to welcome new people to **WOW** this term and see them settle in. Young people from six different high schools come along, so WOW is a great gathering point in the week for them. We have seen the young volunteers growing into taking the lead each week, by setting up the space, leading games, facilitating discussion groups and washing up.

The **Drop In** continues to offer a warm welcome to young people after school and we have had some new Year 7s join, who have started secondary school this term. Week by week we're amazed by the creative ideas that the young volunteers come up with for everyone to join in:

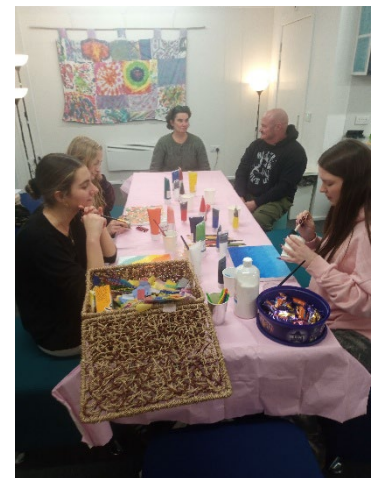


advent candles, bookmarks, photo frames and canvases. We've also been able to share our creative skills with the wider community by making table decorations for an InterACT Christmas party – it's always great to make a connection to what is happening in the local area.

We have also worked in **high school** running wellbeing sessions with a small group of girls, giving space to talk alongside being creative.

Since the launch of **The Cabin** in January, we have worked alongside **InterACT** and gathered a team of volunteers from across the projects to form the **Youth Community Action Team (YCAT)**. The role of YCAT is to look after and manage The Cabin, as well as get involved in the local area. They have helped with decision making around our new furniture, who can use the space and how money will be spent. There are also practical tasks to get stuck in with – cleaning the building, tending the outside space by looking after the planters, weeding and litter picking. And we had a bit of early Christmas excitement as we supported a community party by wrapping presents for the guests. One of the young volunteers has a good eye for this, and shared her skills, which she claimed to have learnt at elf school!

Another area of Thrive that has gathered young people to develop their confidence, gifts and skills is the **Wilderness Project** (part of the URC Yorkshire Synod), which has seen four young people employed in roles at **Messy Church, Drop In** and **WOW**. As well as the opportunity developing them as individuals, it has brought a lot to the groups they have been part of, which have been shaped and enriched by their creative ideas, reflections and the support that they have offered to those who come along.



Thank you for your support of Thrive – the time, gifts, prayer and encouragement are the good foundation for the stories above.

Hannah and Helen, Thrive Staff Team

ECO REPORT

This year the Eco group as such has not met, nevertheless continued efforts are being made to progress work started by MAP to improve the heating and insulation and general upkeep of the building. You will remember the work involved in insulating the ceiling in the sanctuary and lining the walls of the Café Room. We are appreciating the increased warmth this winter. Work on reducing fuel bills is ongoing, and we have just received a certificate from British Gas to say that all our electricity is now obtained from green sources. (See MAP report for other things done on our behalf.)

Individuals have also continued to use the monthly Eco Tips in Outlook and continue their own Eco habits of recycling carefully *eg* reducing the use of plastic bags, washing clothes in cooler water *etc*. Check them out for yourself on the website <https://arocha.org.uk>.

Together with friends from CTCAM we participated in a Fairtrade and Eco Justice Café in March 2025 and raised over £400 for Transform Trade (the successor to Traidcraft).

We, (CTCAM Climate Justice Group) joined with Friends of Gledhow Valley Woods in a Green Fair. Worth a visit if they do it next year. We have also been saving aluminium cans. The profits from the sale go to Médecins Sans Frontieres.

For the future, we need to make our cleaning materials less harmful to the environment, to ensure all our tea and coffee is Fairtrade and, as individuals to understand more about the natural world around us, and to be more aware of our carbon footprint, and conservation of energy.

And finally, perhaps you have seen the URC Calendar this year? The focus was on gardens and pleasingly the **Beckhill Community Garden** is one of those showcased in this way. This project, right outside our back door, is supported by Stainbeck Church – another blessing on our ecological journey. Worth another look.



Christine Robson – Eco group organiser

FINANCIAL REPORT NOTES

Cash position - Funds held at bank at 31 December 2026

Account	General Fund
HSBC Current Account	£6,399
HSBC BMM (Deposit account)	£39
CAF Bank	£12,512
Petty Cash	£0
Total	£18,950
YCU Manse Account	£24,740

Donations and Gift Aid

This year Stainbeck has received a few very generous one-off donations alongside the continued faithfulness of those who give regularly and occasionally.

Also this year we introduced card donations, which have raised £706 so far. We are able to claim GASD (Gift Aid Small Donations) on these donations, which further increases their value.

We were also blessed in music and in donations as the Leeds Concert Band Christmas concert raised £755.93 this year.

Whether donations are one-off or regular, large or small, made by card, cash or bank transfer, with or without Gift Aid, they all add up and make a real difference. Thank you to everyone who gives so generously.

Room Hire

Income from room hire this year stands at £11,248. While this is lower than originally budgeted, given a challenging year, it is really good that we are able to welcome such a great range of community groups.

Hirer	Amount
Beavers & Cubs	£ 780
Craft2gether	£ 924
Good Gym	£ 30

InterAct	£ 1,500
Karate	£ 2,505
Leeds Concert Band	£ 1,290
Lucy's Pop Choir	£ 125
People in Action	£ 1,295
Revive	£ 540
RVS	£ 480
Scout Explorers	£ 540
Weight Watchers	£ 1,240

Nursery

Unfortunately, the new lease for the nursery was not completed by the end of the year, so the current arrangements remain in place while the lease is finalised. Good progress has been made, and we are hopeful this will be completed soon.

Charitable Donations

Details of our charitable donations are shown below. These reflect our continued commitment to supporting local charities in Leeds, as well as our wider church family.

Charity	Amount raised
Baby Bank	£187.10
Food pantry	£350.92
Leeds FIS	£82.14
Christian Aid	£484.83
Martin House	£200.00
St George's Crypt	£200.00

Expenditure - Utilities

Utilities have been our largest area of expenditure this year. It is encouraging that our new electricity contract, which accounted for the largest part of this cost, is now cheaper. Along with the new nursery lease, this should help place us on a more stable footing in 2026.

Utility	Amount
WATER PLUS FIRST PAYMENT	£5,029
SMARTESTENERGY BUS	£22,125
BRITISH GAS	£6,606
WATER PLUS	£0
Contribution from the nursery	£2,000
Total	£31,760

Thanks

Finally, I would like to thank Helen Booth for her help with counting and recording the cash, and Brian Bellwood for assisting with cash counting. Hilary Wilson has now stepped down from approving online payments, and I would like to express my sincere thanks to her for all the work she has done over the past year.

Emmanuelle Bastide-Wilson
Treasurer

COMMUNICATION

When we ask newcomers to Stainbeck, '*How/why did you choose us?*' the usual reply is '*through your website*'. Personal invitation remains important but in today's world the internet and social media is often closer to hand. Times have changed and continue to do so.

So a big 'thank you' to those who enable this. Also to those who write, edit, design and print publicity of all kinds.

If you have ideas, time, suggestions how we can better use the communication gifts that we have please share them with us.

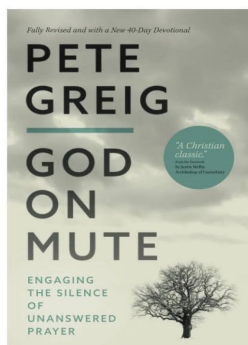
Nicola, Angela and Emmanuelle

Leeds URC Partnership in pictures!

A snapshot of our year together. There is an open invitation to come and take part in all of these gatherings and opportunities.



LEEDS URC PARTNERSHIP LENT COURSE



A 5 week course exploring the themes of Holy Week and how prayer can help us process life's hardest questions.

Beginning on:

Tuesday 11 March, 10:30am, URC in South Leeds, Dewsbury Road, LS11 5HR

Tuesday 11 March, 7:00pm, St Edmund's Roundhay, Lidgett Park Road LS8 1JN

Wednesday 12 March, 7:30pm, Zoom, <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/7019277749>

For more information, email: revnicola.robinson@gmail.com

God in the Manger: Advent Gatherings



A time for reflection and discussion over **three** weeks, led by the Leeds URC Partnership Ministry Team

Beginning on:

Monday 1 December 11am, URC in South Leeds, LS10 3LG

Wednesday 3 December 7:30pm, on Zoom

Thursday 4 December 1:30pm, Stainbeck Church, LS7 2PP

For more information, email: revnicola.robinson@gmail.com





**A Quiet Day
at the
Communtiy of the Resurrection**



Pet Blessing



First Aid Course



Away Day

On Saturday 10 May, people from across our Leeds URC Partnership churches came together for an Away Day.



Out of these discussions, the following priorities for our Partnership were identified:

1. Partnership Worship services (once/twice a year) and non-worship opportunities to celebrate together
2. Quarterly Diary from the Ministry Team including worship and other events
3. Opportunities for Leeds young people to connect with each other regularly
4. Greater practical co-operation eg: designing and printing posters

5. Freeing up Elders for mission by centralising admin, treasurer, youth work roles
6. Worship opportunities outside Sunday morning
7. Encouraging more people to explore leading worship

Administrator

There are many types of tasks across our Partnership churches which could help us facilitate better and more effective communication. As such, we have applied to our Synod's Mission Capacity Fund for a grant to employ a Part-time Administrator.

An Administrator would enable the vision and mission of our churches to continue at a time when there are fewer Elders and members able to do this without this technical and practical help. The tasks carried out by the Administrator will give renewed confidence and encouragement to the Elders and members and free them up for mission and ministry.

Vision from the Ministry Team

A reminder that the vision and opportunity of the Leeds URC Partnership is:

“to enable each member church to fulfil God's vision and mission within its own local community, enabled by the Ministry Team. Although some activities may involve some or all of the member churches, many will be for churches in their own communities. Through the Partnership, the

churches will continue to co-operate, encourage each other and make the best use of limited resources."

As a Ministry Team, we recognise our callings are intertwined with the need to continually discern, grow and follow where the Spirit is leading. We also realize as people of faith and for our churches, we are living in challenging times, from the ongoing effects of Covid to being disheartened by declining numbers at church services on a Sunday, the difficulty of maintaining buildings and ensuring compliancy etc. Yet, God is with us and within us, offering new missional opportunities in our churches, communities and world. Being part of a flourishing Partnership means we need to be open to new ways of sharing God's love and new patterns of ministry.

What would it mean to be a Ministry Team which effectively and faithfully serves across our churches, draws on all our gifts and skills?

A question which in the new year requires prayer and honest and creative conversations as a Ministry Team, within our Steering Group and congregations.

Yours in peace,

Geoff Ellis, Angela Hughes, Tim Lowe, Nicola Anne Robinson, Alex Walker

- Leeds URC Partnership Ministry Team -

Revd Dr Nicola Robinson, Minister: revnicola.robinson@gmail.com